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GHOST RIDER
2099
DIRECT EDITION

WELCUMTO MEDI-KWIK MAYITAKEYER ORDER?
YEAH, I NEED --
SPEAKUP, PLEASE.
BUT MMOOOMM... MY FINGERS'RE FALLING OFF!
QUIET DOWN, OR I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO CRY ABOUT!
I SAID, I NEED A JUMBO MEDICILLIN --
-- THREE ORDERS O' HAPPY MEDS --
GREAT GIBBERING ELVIS!
MMMMMMMMM
MMM

NEUROPOLITIQUE

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TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

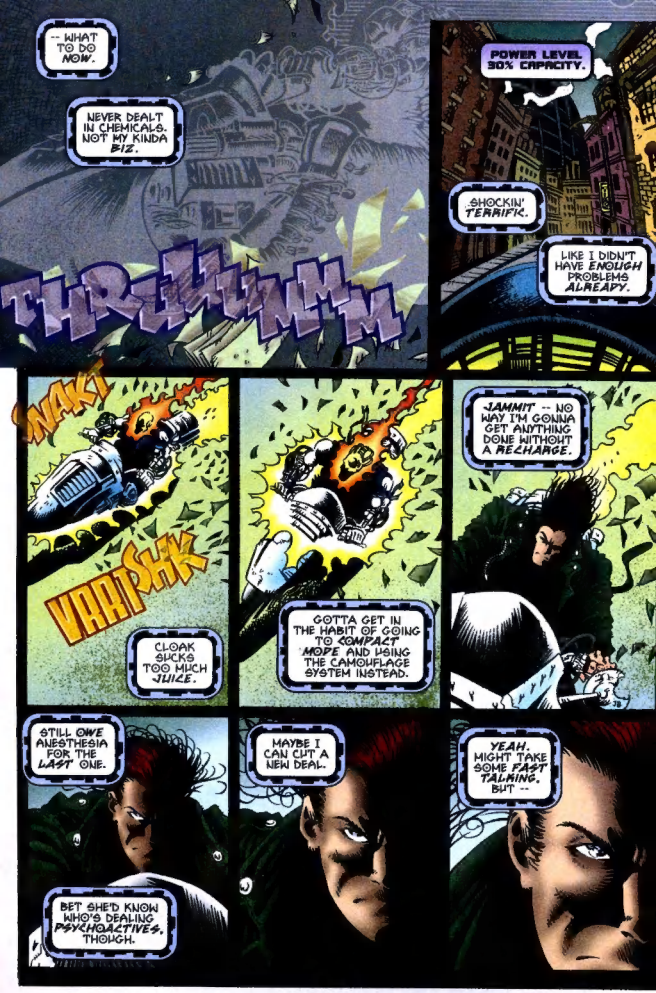
TONSILLECTOMY $29.95
TOURNIQUET .99
I... AH... THAT IS...
YOU GOT CREDIT?
I GOT YOUR CREDIT RIGHT --
Um, LOOK...
...I REALLY THINK YOU OUGHTA DO WHAT HE SAYS.
HE'S NOT GOOD WITH CROWDS.
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
GOOD LORD.
SANDOZ, MAN -- AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU! YOU GOTTA --
AND EXACTLY WHO -- OR WHAT -- ARE YOU?
I'M A...
...FRIEND OF ZERO COCHRANE.
AND SO IS SHE.
AND I'M JIMMY ALHAZARED, A.K.A. THE DREADED --
Mm.
ALL RIGHT.
BRING HER INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM.
AND PUT THAT HEAD OUT, WILL YOU?

DEFINITELY A DRUG REACTION.
WHAT'S SHE ON?
NEEMO-PRO... SOMETHING. I DON'T 'MEMBER, EXACTLY.
MNEMOPRO-METHYLENE. STIMULATES THE HIPPO-CAMPUS.
NOT EXACTLY POPULAR AS A RECREATIONAL.
NO, IT WASN'T HER, IT WAS THE GUYS AT D/MONIX.
SHOT HER FULL OF IT... SHE'S BEEN LIKE THIS EVER SINCE.
LOOKS LIKE ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK TO ME.
HAPPENS SOMETIMES, WITH SYNTHETIC HORMONES.
I NEED TO RUN SOME TESTS, CHECK A COUPLE DATABASES.
ISN'T GOING TO BE CHEAP.
YOU TELL COCHRANE THAT THIS MAKES US EVEN, OKAY?
GOT IT.

LATER...
IT'S INDUCED REPETITIVE MENEMONIC SYNDROME.
HER BRAIN CHEMISTRY'S LOCKED INTO A SORT OF MEMORY FEEDBACK LOOP.
GOT TO BE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO, RIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW. IT'S NOT A COMMON CONDITION.
WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH IT?
MEANS IT HASN'T BEEN STUDIED --
-- BECAUSE THERE'S NOT A LOT OF PROFIT IN DEVELOPING TREATMENTS FOR SMALL CONSUMER BASES.
THERE USED TO BE SOMETHING, THOUGH... A PSYCHOACTIVE CALLED NOOTROPINE.
LOOKED LIKE A PROMISING TREATMENT FOR A VARIETY OF THINGS, BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT BANNED IT.
TESTED BRIEFLY BACK AROUND '64 OR SO, IT HAD THE EFFECT OF RENDERING THE BRAIN "PLASTIC," FREEING IT FROM HABITUAL NEURAL RESPONSES.
BUT IF IT WAS GOOD FOR THINGS, CURSED PEOPLE N'STUFF, WHY'D THEY DO THAT?
THINK ABOUT IT.
THE LAST THING THE POWERS THAT BE WANT AVAILABLE ON THE STREETS IS A DRUG THAT DESTROYS PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONING.
CAN'T HAVE PAVLOV'S DOGS SLIPPING THEIR LEASHES, AFTER ALL.

BACK IN THE LAST CENTURY, THEY FOUGHT THE LARGEST UNDECLARED CIVIL WAR IN HISTORY OVER NEURO-POLITICS.
LYSERGIC ACID, MARIJUANA, IBOGAINE, MDMA -- THERE WAS PLENTY OF CLINICAL EVIDENCE FOR THERAPEUTIC USAGE FOR ALL OF THEM --
-- BUT THAT DIDN'T MATTER TO THE PEOPLE IN POWER.
I GET IT.
HARD TO CONTROL PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS WHEN THEY'RE BUSY HOTWIRING THEIR OWN PERCEPTUAL SYSTEMS.
RIGHT.
SO THEY SUPPRESSED THOSE, AND CONCENTRATED ON COVERTLY PROMOTING THE TRADE IN DRUGS THAT MADE PEOPLE HAPPIER AND STUPIDER.
ENOUGH HISTORY, MAN.
HOW CAN WE SCORE SOME NOOTROPINE?
BUPHORICS, COCAINE-ANALOGS, SYNTHETIC ENDORPHINS -- STUFF THAT'D GET PEOPLE HIGH WITHOUT MAKING THEM THINK.
FAR AS I KNOW, YOU CAN'T. EVEN THE PRECURSOR CHEMICALS NEEDED TO MANUFACTURE IT ARE HIGHLY CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES.
IF I CAN GET SOME, CAN YOU HELP HER?
MAYBE. BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT FAST.
AFTER A WHILE, HER CONDITION BECOMES IRREVERSIBLE...

"...SAY 48 HOURS, MAXIMUM."
KYLIE...
I DUNNO IF YOU CAN HEAR ME OR NOT, BUT...HANG ON.
I'M NOT GONNA SCREW THIS ONE UP.
COULDN'T SAVE WARE-WOLF...
...OR THE MARTYRS.
IT'S MY FAULT D/MONIX WENT AFTER YOU.
I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU DOWN.
NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES.
I PROMISE.
STAY WITH HER.
I GOT ERRANDS TO RUN.
BUT I'LL BE BACK.
WHAT'S HIS DEAL?
WHY'D SOMEONE LIKE HIM LOG TIME ON HER ACCOUNT? IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S ANYBODY IMPORTANT OR ANYTHING.
FTHAT MATTER, HE SAVED ME FROM D/MONIX, AND HE DOESN'T KNOW ME FROM JACK.
GOTTA BE A REASON.
SURE WISH I KNEW --


-- WHAT TO DO NOW.
NEVER DEALT IN CHEMICALS. NOT MY KINDA BIZ.
THRUMM
POWER LEVEL 30% CAPACITY.
SHOCKIN' TERRIFIC.
LIKE I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS ALREADY.
NAK!
VARP SHK
CLOAK SUCKS TOO MUCH JUICE.
GOTTA GET IN THE HABIT OF GOING TO COMPACT MODE AND USING THE CAMOUFLAGE SYSTEM INSTEAD.
JAMMIT -- NO WAY I'M GONNA GET ANYTHING DONE WITHOUT A RECHARGE.
I STILL OWE ANESTHESIA FOR THE LAST ONE.
BET SHE'D KNOW WHO'S DEALING PSYCHOACTIVES, THOUGH.
MAYBE I CAN CUT A NEW DEAL.
YEAH. MIGHT TAKE SOME FAST TALKING. BUT --

-- I'M AFRAID TALKING FAST WON'T HELP YOU.
THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT YOU'RE A DISGRACE TO D/MONIX, JACKSON.
YOU HAD A BRIGHT FUTURE HERE, UNTIL YOUR CLUMSY ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT THE SINGAPORE ARCHIVE FOR YOUR OWN GAIN.
NOW, AS A DIRECT RESULT OF YOUR ACTIONS, THAT INFORMATION IS IRREVOCABLY LOST.
SIR, I --
SAVE YOUR PATHETIC EXCUSES!
YOUR PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN UNSATISFACTORY.
YOU ARE HEREBY REMOVED FROM YOUR POSITION AS HEAD OF CORPORATE SECURITY --
-- AND DEMOTED TO ONE MORE APPROPRIATE TO THE CONTRIBUTION YOU ARE ABLE TO MAKE TO THIS FIRM.
ONLY... DEMOTED?
THANK YOU, SIR.

YOU'LL BE WORKING ON ONE OF MY [redacted] PROJECTS, DEVOTED TO [redacted] THE [redacted] COMPONENT OF DISOBEDIENCE.
YOUR RECENT ACTIONS HAVE DEMONSTRATED YOU TO BE A SUITABLE CANDIDATE --
-- FOR EXPERIMENTAL STUDY.
AT MINIMUM WAGES, OF COURSE.
SEND IN HARRISON COCHRANE.
A... LAB RAT?
OH, GOD, NO... PLEASE..!
HARRISON! DO COME IN.
WE NEED TO TALK.
TALK, SIR?
YES.
ABOUT YOUR SON, [redacted]
ABOUT THE GHOST RIDER.
AND ABOUT --

SPIN CONTROL ?!
WHAT THE SHOCK IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
IT MEANS THAT WE DON'T AIR ANYTHING THAT EVEN MENTIONS CORPORATE ENTITIES UNLESS WE FIRST GET FULL APPROVAL FROM THEIR P.R. LIAISONS.
AS SOON AS THAT GHOST RIDER...THING... OPENED HIS MOUTH AND LET "D/MONIX" FALL OUT, WE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO PULL YOUR FEED.
YOU KNOW THE RULES AS WELL AS I DO.
BUT WE'RE TALKING NEWS HERE, MORTON --
-- SOMETHING WE SHOULD SATELLITE GLOBALLY!
FORGET IT.
WE HANDED OVER ALL THE MASTER TAPES ALREADY.
WHAT ABOUT THE TRUTH?
WHAT ABOUT THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW?!
OH, COME ON, WILLIS, DON'T GIVE ME THAT -- I KNOW FOR A FACT YOU WEREN'T BORN YESTERDAY.
THE PUBLIC TRADED THE [illegible] TO KNOW FOR THE [illegible] TO WATCH A LONG TIME AGO.
THE NEWS'S BEEN FILTERED THROUGH THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE STATUS QUO FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS.

AND WE WERE ALONG WITH IT BECAUSE THAT WAS IN OUR BEST INTEREST.
OR DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT IF WE FOUND OUT WATCHING VIDEO CAUSES CANCER --
-- THAT WE'D TELL PEOPLE ABOUT IT ON THE SIX O'CLOCK NEWS?
Uh, HEY. IT DOESN'T...
DOES IT?
Eh.
NO COMMENT.
LOOK, I UNDERSTAND.
YOU COULDVE RIDDEN THIS ONE TO THE TOP OF THE RATINGS.
IT'S A TOUGH BREAK, BUT GLITCH HAPPENS, YKNOW?
TRY TO THINK OF IT AS THE PRICE OF DOING BUSINESS...

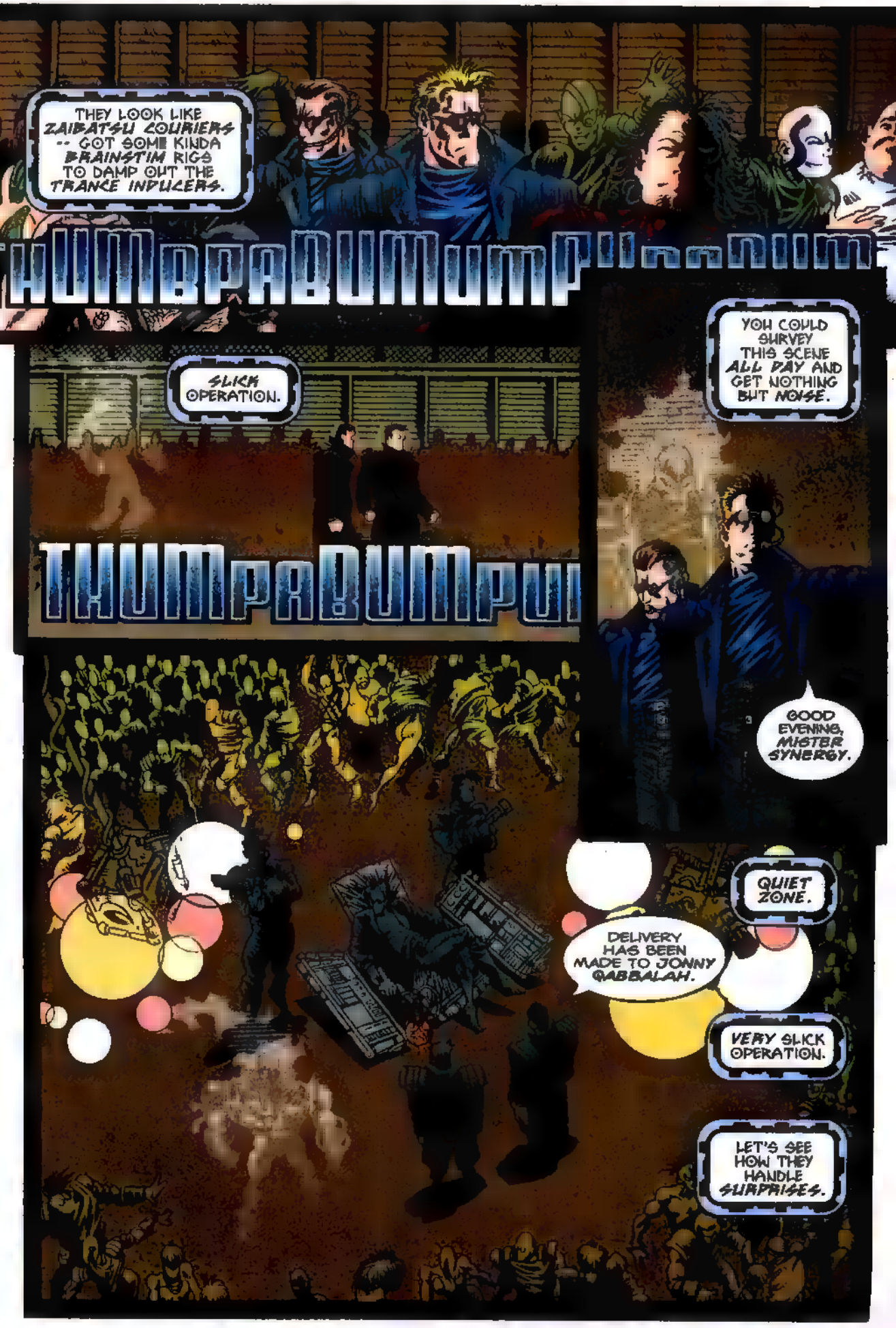
THIS IS GETTING EXPENSIVE, COCHRANE.
BAR CODE
LOOK, ANESTHESIA, I KNOW IT'S NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL DEAL --
MAYBE YOUR STORY AIN'T WORTH IT.
MAYBE YOU GOT NO STORY TO BEGIN WITH.
-- BUT I REALLY NEED --
THE ORIGINAL DEAL WAS AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGMENT TO BEGIN WITH.
NOW YOU IN HERE, TRYING TO BUY MORE CREDIT WITH NOTHING BUT VAPOR.
YOU NEVER WERE ANYTHING BUT A HUSTLER, COCHRANE.
GUESS THAT AIN'T NEVER GONNA CHANGE.
OHHHH...
TRUST ME --

SHAK
CHKT
YRRRCD
XCHKT
-- I'VE CHANGED.
I... STAND CORRECTED.
'CORDING TO THE NEWS, YOU'VE BEEN A BUSY BOY LATELY.
NOW, THEN. TELL ME EVERY LITTLE THING.
IT STARTED WHEN THE MARTYRS AND I SPIKED A FIBEOP TRUNKLINE --
-- BOOSTED A D/MONIX HYPERSECURE ARCHIVE IN TRANSIT.
D/MONIX FINGERED THE MARTYRS FOR THE JOB, HIRED THE ARTIFICIAL TO GREASE US AND GET THE ARCHIVE BACK.

I GOT AWAY AND MANAGED TO ENCRYPT THE ARCHIVE INTO A PHONE CALL TO MY GIRLFRIEND BEFORE THE KIDZ CAUGHT UP WITH ME.
FIGURED THERE WAS NO WAY THEY WERE LETTING ME LIVE, SO I RUINED THEIR FUN BY JACKING INTO THE NET JUMPED TO THE MAX. AND THEN
'SCUSE ME?
--
?!
SOMETHING'S WRONG
SOUNDS TO ME LIKE YOU'VE BEEN TAMPERED WITH.
WHOEVER MADE YOU... WHATEVER IT IS YOU ARE NOW, MAYBE?
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A "YES."
I 'SPECT THEY DIDN'T WANT YOU LETTING THE WORLD ONTO THEM... BUILT IN AN INHIBITORY PROGRAM AGAINST TALKING ABOUT 'EM.
SHOLMIN' PUSBAGS!
I'M GONNA --
PEAL... WITH THAT... LATER.
I GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO RIGHT NOW.

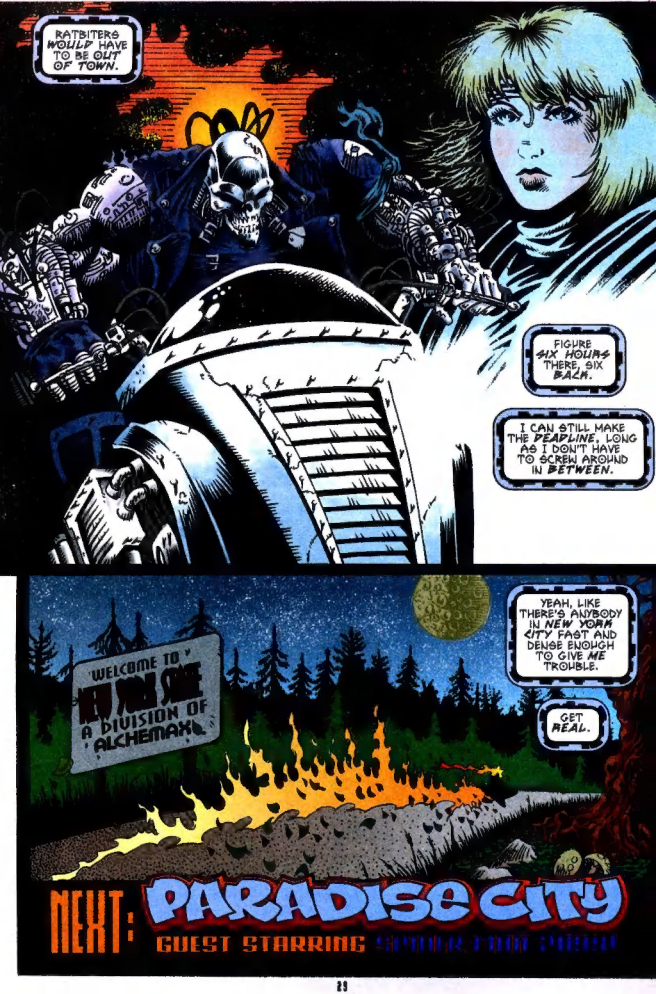
LOOK, THESIA, I GOT STUFF THAT CAN'T WAIT.
I NEED TO CHARGE UP AGAIN, AND THEN I GOTTA SCORE SOME NOOTROPINE. FAST.
RECHARGE IS NO MAY PROBLEMO.
IF THE PAST COUPLE [redacted] ANY INDICATION —
— YOU [redacted] JUICE'LL BE [redacted] INVESTMENT IN MAKING SURE THE SECURICOPS'RE TOO BUSY TO MESS MY BIZ.
BUT NOOTROPINE? THAT'S SERIOUS BLACK PHARMACIST MATERIAL.
THERE IS A GUY, GOES BY THE NAME MAX SYNERGY. DEALS IN EXOTIC STUFF. DESIGNER NEURO-TRANSMITTERS, THAT KIND OF THING.
ANYBODY [redacted] THIS TOWN CAN GET YOU LIT, IT'S [redacted]
CLUB ON LEVEL THREE, CALLED SAINT VITUS'S DANCETERIA.
WHERE'S HE AT?

ST. VITUS'S DANCETERIA
Level Three between ramps 15 & 19 west.
No cover.
Now in its 17th smash year!
Over 22,000 dedicated resident Ravers; beginners welcome.
Three miles of dance floor; ambient psychosonic and sublimirelinal enhanced environment.
KUMBPAL
JUBABUM
But remember --
-- if you're not in the groove --
-- you may as well be invisible.
SEEMS I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WORKING THE CROWD TONIGHT.
BUMP ATHUM PABUI IPUM
FROM DOMINUS SISTEM ANOMALY: TRANCYHOSE CITY AFTER DARK. ©2098 MANJUNE MEDIA


THEY LOOK LIKE ZAIBATSU COURIERS -- GOT SOME KINDA BRAINSTIM RIGS TO DAMP OUT THE TRANCE INDUCERS.
THUMPABUMPUMPINNNIM
SLICK OPERATION.
THUMPABUMPUM
YOU COULD SURVEY THIS SCENE ALL DAY AND GET NOTHING BUT NOISE.
GOOD EVENING, MISTER SYNERGY.
QUIET ZONE.
DELIVERY HAS BEEN MADE TO JONNY QABBALAH.
VERY SLICK OPERATION.
LET'S SEE HOW THEY HANDLE SURPRISES.

JAGGED V.I.P. LOUNGE.
HOW D'YA KEEP THE FEEBS OUT?
HOW GLITCH!
NOW, GUNTHER, DON'T BE RUDE – ESPECIALLY NOT TO SUCH AN... INTERESTING GUEST.
THIS AREA [redacted] BY [redacted] LIMINAL ACOUSTICS. A WALL OF SOUND, OF SORTS.
THE REVELERS [redacted] QUITE OBLIVIOUS TO ANYTHING WITHIN ITS [redacted]
REMIND ME TO BE INTERESTED SOMEDAY.
WORD IS YOU'RE THE MAN TO SEE FOR RARE CHEMICALS.
I'M LOOKING TO DO BIZ.
STANDARD BATCH LOT, OR CUSTOM?

NOOTROPINE.
NOOTROPINE... aghhhhhh
THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS.
I'D BE HAPPY TO OBLIGE YOU, IF ONLY FOR SENTIMENTAL REASONS -- UNFORTUNATELY, I CANNOT.
TO SYNTHESIZE NOOTROPINE, I'D [redacted] A SUPPLY OF 2-4-5 TRIOXIDICLORIZIDE.
SO? GET SOME.
IT'S NOT QUITE THAT SIMPLE. ONLY ONE COMPANY EVEN MAKES IT ANYMORE, AND THEN ONLY FOR THEIR OWN USE.
YEAH?
INFO-DUMP ME, [redacted] I CAN TEACH THEM TO SHARE...


RATBITERS WOULD HAVE TO BE OUT OF TOWN.
FIGURE SIX HOURS THERE, SIX BACK.
I CAN STILL MAKE THE DEADLINE, LONG AS I DON'T HAVE TO SCREW AROUND IN BETWEEN.
WELCOME TO
A DIVISION OF ALCHEMAX
YEAH, LIKE THERE'S ANYBODY IN NEW YORK CITY FAST AND DENSE ENOUGH TO GIVE ME TROUBLE.
GET REAL.
NEXT: PARADISE CITY
GUEST STARRING

STRAIGHT FROM EVAN

The competition to name our letters page was hot and heavy, but in the end it was the reigning champ on the inside track, Len Kaminski, who found our perfect *nom-de-plume*.

Honorable mentions go to Doug Smith ("Wire Taps"), Speid ("Cynput", "Downloads", "Blitzfeed"), and Bob Schreib, Jr. ("Wireheads"). And for everyone else who gave it a shot — thanks for playing.

Those of you who regularly cruise the information highway might want to drop us an electronic line once in a while. Writer Len Kaminski is available on CompuServe at I.D. #74130.3464, and I'm currently on America Online as EvanSkol. You should also check out the AOL comics boards for postings regarding this title. See you in cyberspace, people!

This issue marks the debut of our hot new regular artist, Kyle Hotz. Having recently worked on the DOCTOR STRANGE ANNUAL, Kyle says he feels GR2099 is a character he was "born to draw." I agree with him — how about you?

Dear GHOST RIDER 2099 Crew,

The only thing I can say about GHOST RIDER 2099 is: awesome, awesome, awesome! And did I mention "awesome"?! This is, so far, the best 2099 title; just slightly better than the X-MEN and completely blowing away all the others.

The last comic to impress me like this was the 1990 Ghost Rider. I just have a few questions:

1) Does Kenshiro Cochrane have a piece of the Medallion of Power?

2) Is a Spirit of Vengeance involved, or should the new Ghost Rider even be considered a Spirit of Vengeance?

3) Is that hellfire surrounding Ghost Rider's head?

4) Was that hellfire surrounding Ghost Rider's hand chainsaw?

5) Are you going to be introducing any more powers into Ghost Rider's repertoire other than the strength, durability, transportation and control over his form (the manufacturing of the chainsaw)?

6) When Ghost Rider has "disappeared", is that merely the notorious speed of the Ghost Rider or is it teleportation?

I would just like to thank you for reminding me why I started reading comics in the first place. So until one of the Ghost Riders has to use a Bic to transform, make mine Marvel.

Jay Maynard
4423 State Route 40
Tipp City, OH 45371

Thanks for the kind words, Jay. Here are your answers:

1) No.

2) No!

3) NO! It's holographically simulated flame — in honor of Zero's murdered comrades, the Hotwire Martyrs.

4) NOOOOO!! It's just regular old plasma energy or something like that.

5) Yes, we already have. Although, just to set the record straight, GR didn't "manufacture" the electrosaw out of thin air...it was always one of his onboard weapons. He can't make new weapons for himself.

6) As you must know by now, GR doesn't teleport, but when he engages his cloaking field, it sure looks like it...

Dear Evan Skolnick,

Well, now you've *really* done it.

I'm a very picky comics reader. I eschew gimmicks, crossovers and badly-written comics. So now you come along and snatch Mr. Bachalo from *Shade*, leaving one of my favorite books with a rash (and I do mean rash) of fill-in artists, and assign him to a 2099 book with a foil cover and a writer named Len Kaminski (whom I don't dislike, mind you; I just hadn't been given a reason to like him).

This did not bode well.

Prior to GR2099, the 2099 line has been disappointing to me. So, Ghost Rider, that painfully tacky character that should have stayed in the 70's along with Black Lightning and Man-Thing, gets an "ooh-hip" cyberpunk coat of paint and is thrust into the 21st century.

Darn, this book is good!

This book deserves a new vocabulary, so it can be praised with garnishes fresher than "this book is phat" or "fly" or "new."

In one mighty, bold stroke, you really escalated the battle for my comics buck. And you'll keep getting it; that is, as long as you can keep the following:

1) The pacing. This book hits you with a thick plot and deep background (I love the "Gods of Cyberspace" stuff — keep it, please!), but does not bog down with poor flow or weighty dialogue. I expected this kind of quality from the Bachalo and Buckingham art team, but was pleasantly surprised by the power of Len's contributions. Good stuff.

2) The "moments". A moment (in my slang) is a sequence in a story that makes you sit up and take notice, letting a "cool" slip through your teeth. The "vengeance" set-up on the last two pages of issue #1 is a great example. And I love the black chainsaw. Better than Ah-nald's "Hasta la vista, baby."

3) The supporting team. The colors and lettering are truly professional. (How do the coloring and lettering teams split their respective duties? What do Scheele and Starkings do that Heroic Age and Gaushell don't, and vice versa?)

4) No crossovers. I love GR, but don't make me buy every 2099 book for one story. Ever. I've been burned once on X-FACTOR, and almost twice on SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN (I stress *almost* twice — I dropped the book finally) due to the C-stuff. Please, no more!

In short — this is good. We want more.

Ray Cornwall
28 LaCosta Drive
Blackwood, NJ 08012

Glad to have pleasantly surprised you, Ray. In regards to your questions regarding the lettering and coloring, here's how it works. Richard Starkings designed all the lettering in GR2099 on computer, while John Gaushell is the guy who does most of the actual month-to-month lettering. On the coloring front, Christie chooses all the colors and color schemes for the book, and the folks at Heroic Age enhance and translate her watercolor guides into computer files that are used to generate the printing plates that are eventually used to produce the final comic book.

Simple, right?

Dear Evan,

I just finished reading issue #2 of GHOST RIDER 2099. I like the art, the story isn't half bad, but I have one major complaint. Just because this series takes place in the future, why must this Ghost Rider be merely a robot with a human mind? Wouldn't it stand to reason that real ghosts and spirits will also exist in the future? Since everything in the 2099 universe is so technical, it would be nice to see some elements of the supernatural included to make things more interesting.

Thomas V. Accardo
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MACHINE LANGUAGE

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ALL CORRESPONDENCE MUST INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS, THOUGH WE WILL WITHHOLD THAT INFO AT YOUR REQUEST.

Dear Mr. Skolnick,

I'm not entirely sure what I expected from this book, but I do know that what I got sure as heck wasn't it! The question now is: is that a good thing or a bad thing?

To be honest, I'm not entirely sure of that myself. I'm prepared to sign on for the long haul on this book based on the fact that it's ostensibly part of Marvel's 2099 line, which I'm enjoying a great deal, and I don't want to miss any intriguing crossovers... but on the other hand, a lot of what I see here gives me grave misgivings.

For starters, from this first issue, it looks as if the character calling itself Ghost Rider has little (if any) connection to the Spirit of Vengeance that has made the Midnight Sons and their line so popular. Rather than being a supernatural manifestation, this GR seems to be a product of cyberspace.

While that might be endearing to some of my fellow DOOM 2099 fans who've enjoyed the romps Doom has taken through cyberspace, and who might be anticipating a link between these two books, I find the prospect of a scientifically-based Ghost Rider disturbing. It's too big a departure from the original Ghost Rider concept; it would be like saying that the Hulk's power comes not from gamma radiation but from a leprechaun's curse.

Now, if writer Len Kaminski has plans to reveal that the beings our young hero met in cyberspace are somehow connected to the Spirit of Vengeance we've seen in the present-day Midnight Sons books, then that's fine ... and it's an explanation I look forward to seeing, because I'm sure it'll be a lulu. But if that's not the way Len plans to go, I'm not sure I'll be sticking around much longer.

David Peattie
4517 Birch Bark Road
Concord, CA 94521

GR2099 Guys,

I'm not a very big fan of Ghost Rider. Fact is, I don't like him at all. It's one of those books I've picked up every once in a while because I heard how great it was, but just never saw the character in as good a light as so many others. Until now.

What can I say that could encompass my appreciation of a character created from what seems to be a blend of *Terminator, Lobo, RoboCop, Batman* and just a dash of *Judge Dredd*? I'd say I'm speechless, but here I am writing this letter, so I guess I'll just say that, in my mind, you've got yourself quite a hot little character going on.

The factor that makes the "other" Ghost Riders unappealing to me is their supernatural backgrounds, and that seems to be the one thing you guys left out of the newest incarnation of the Spirit of Vengeance. To me, stories involving technology, no matter how advanced or stretched their usage may be, have always been slightly more tangible than storylines involving demons and religions and gods.

I feel comic characters have to have at least one foot in reality to be good characters, or else we as mere humans can't relate to them. I myself have never had a one-on-one talk with God, nor have I ever had Satan over for coffee and a smoke. Therefore, comics with these backgrounds tend to turn me off, with very few exceptions.

Technology is very real — we see it every day — so a character like this new GR seems remotely plausible (I know we're talking comics and I know comics are supposed to be creative and imaginative, so I mean plausible in the utmost fictional sense). I'm hoping this guy won't stray from where he's at now and become another demonic figure. I think he's perfect the way he is.

The 2099 line is kind of like Marvel's answer to DC's "Elseworlds", and it allows us to see different sides of the same coins. We already have a supernatural Ghost Rider for those interested in that kind of tale, so maybe the 2099 GR can stay as different-yet-the-same as he appears to be in the first two issues.

With all that said, the story and art in the first two issues are amazing ... keep it up. The cover to #1 is what made me take notice and give Ghost Rider another chance (who says cover enhancements don't work?), and I'm glad that I did. He's one of the coolest-looking cyborg, skull-headed, bike-riding, leather-wearing, chainsaw-wielding dead/alive vigilantes I've ever seen.

Jerome Lawrence
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Louisville, KY 40059

Well, there you have it ... both sides of the "supernatural/cybernatural" argument. These are the very issues that we wrestled with when we first started developing this title. The world of 2099 is technological. The world of Ghost Rider is supernatural. Do ever the twain meet?

It was a well-known science fiction truism, first spoken by the great Arthur C. Clarke, which showed us where to go: "Any technology, sufficiently advanced, will seem to work like magic." Len Kaminski took that concept and ran with it, developing a whole cybernatural landscape for the series.

As for David Peattie's contention that GHOST RIDER 2099's lack of supernatural elements represents "too big a departure from the original Ghost Rider concept"; well, we've got some bad news for you, David. If you check your Marvel history very carefully, you'll find that Johnny Blaze was not the original Ghost Rider. The true original Ghost Rider — who's now known as the Phantom Rider — was Carter Slade, a Wild West super hero who used cutting-edge science of the time to confuse his enemies and make them think they were seeing ghosts! If anything, GR2099 is closer to the "original Ghost Rider concept" than Johnny Blaze was or Dan Ketch is.

But the point is, so what? As long as the stories are exciting and the characters are compelling, the whole supernatural/cybernatural debate should become moot. Try to keep an open mind, and judge things based on what they are, not what you wanted or expected them to be.

Here endeth the lesson.

Dear Len and Chris,

Your GHOST RIDER 2099 series has an ambitious storyline. The existence of independent cyber-beings "living" inside of the world-spanning Internet is an SF shibboleth with a lot of potential mileage.

There is one major technical glitch, however, with all the 2099 titles. A century from now, the manufacturing fields of nanotechnic (very small) structural assembly and composite, synthetic materials will be so advanced that many things will be so tough that it will be like having real-life adamantium. Many of the weapons, body armor, exo-power suits and paramilitary vehicles will be so tough that you'd need a baby nuke to destroy them. They'd be completely impervious to the heroes' super powers. Characters like Ghost Rider 2099 would be made of the same stuff, but the indestructibility of the materials would still resist the force he could exert against it. Even the futuristic weapons depicted might be unable to dent them. They'd still have spectacular, pyrotechnic slugfests; it's just that both sides would find it futile to damage the other.

This indestructible material is a "catch-22" of the science fiction writing profession. Usually they just write around it by limiting the tough materials to the rich heavies who are the only ones who can afford the expensive construction of such items. Even so, it's something you have to keep in mind, that vehicles and body armor in the year 2099 would be a lot harder to damage than anything our manufacturers can even approximate today. Comics do not necessarily have to depict the future in hard certainties, but they can be a grand showcase of what's been speculated about.

Bob Schreib, Jr.
(Address withheld by request)

Bob, it's great to hear from someone who actually knows for sure what's going to happen in the future. Are there any stocks on Wall Street you particularly like? Let us know...

Dear Len, Chris, Mark, Evan & Co.,

What I like so far: the awesome pencils, the dark inks, the fast-paced yet logical story, the slammin' word balloons, the interesting subplots, the riotous humor, the totally original "ghost-out" effects, the jammin' sound effects, the high-tech action, the riveting colors, and ... did I mention the mind-blowing pencils? You know, Len, Chris and Mark should have been working together long ago. Their work is top-notch!

What I don't like so far: why do I have to wait another thirty days?

J.R. Stolze
106 W. Pennsylvania Ave. #1108
Redlands, CA 92374

We're working as fast as we can! (Yeesh! Whatta grouch!)

NEXT:

(Wait till you see it in color!)

BULLPEN BULLETINS

MARVEL COMICS

ProFile
ANDY KUBERT

Artist **Andy Kubert** describes his work on the X-MEN as "the best job I ever had!" Here, Andy tells how he got the job, as well as what it's like to be part of a comic book drawing dynasty that includes his brother, **Adam** and his father, **Joe!**

Where and when were you born?
I was born in Boonton, NJ, on February 27, 1962.

How did you break into comics?
I started off as a letterer — my dad taught me how to do that. I got into the drawing part from attending my dad's school (the Joe Kubert School of Comic Art in Dover, NJ). Letterin' got me into Marvel — I lettered the VOID INDIGO graphic novel, and the VOID INDIGO series, which lasted two issues!

How long did you attend the school?
Three years.

Did you do your homework every night?
I had no choice! (laughter.)

Did your brother, Adam, go to school with you?
Yeah, we went at the same time.

Which one of you was the better student?
I was, of course!

How do you and Adam get along?
We get along good. Our studios are right next door to each other, and we're always going back and forth.

Did you always want to work in comics?
I had no idea what I wanted to do! I didn't start drawing until I was 20 years old. Originally I was just going to go to my dad's school for a year. I figured I would get a job working for the school, not as a teacher, but maybe in the administrative department. I never thought I would draw for the school!

When did you graduate?
I finished school in '84. I began lettering while I was still in school. My dad was editing *Sgt. Rock* at the time, and he would give work to his second and third year students.

What was your first art job for Marvel?
I did a backup in SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN. Then I did a whole issue of SAVAGE SWORD. Then I went and did some DC stuff — I think it was *Warlord*. I used to remember the order I did stuff in — now it all blends together!

How did you get assigned to the X-MEN?
Jim Lee decided to quit. Bob Harras called me. It took me half a second to decide!

Who are your favorite members of the team?
Gambit and Colossus.

Had you always been an X-MEN fan?
No. My dad used to bring home comics when I was a kid, but they were just DC's. I never knew Marvel existed! It wasn't until I was going to my dad's school that I discovered the X-Men. I started collecting Marc Silvestri's issues — I'm a big fan of his work.

Do you have a mutant power?
Yeah, but you wouldn't want to print what it is!

Did you ever have a crush on any of the girls from the Brady Bunch?
Yeah — Alice the maid!

NEWSLINE

If you're in the New York area this week, check out the Marvel Mega-Tour at the Meadowlands Convention Center, in Secaucus, NJ! Participating area retailers include: Alternate Realities (914) 723-7950, A & S Comics (201) 896-0280, Comic Attitudes (908) 572-6930, Dream Factory (203) 849-8977, Heroes Outpost (908) 561-5511 and Starlog (201) 712-1414.

A reminder that upcoming stops on the Mega-Tour include the L. A. Hilton and Towers on August 27th, the Arlington Convention Center in Dallas on September 3, and McCormick Place in Chicago on September 24th. Marvel will be there — all that's missing is you!

HYPE BOX

CLAN DESTINE #1 written and drawn by the amazing **Alan Davis** — on sale now!

NOW ON SALE

- **ALICE COOPER: LAST TEMPTATION OF ALICE #2 OF 3:** The sinister curtain rises on act two! By Gaiman/Bill.
- **ALADDIN #1:** Your wish is our command, as Aladdin gets his own monthly book! By Nordling/Cosa & Reguard/Albrecht!
- **AVENGERS #379:** It's hard-hitting heroics as **Hera** harasses Hercules! By Harras/Epting/Palmer!
- **AVENGERS DOUBLE FEATURE #1:** Featuring the premiere issue of MANTIMAN #1! By Perez/Moore/Dzon!
- **BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD #6:** The boys join the circus! Or is that about your sideshows! By Parker!
- **CLAN DESTINE #1:** From the people who brought you EXCALIBUR! By Davis/Farmer!
- **CONAN THE ADVENTURER #5:** There once was a man-mountain from Khitai ... By Thomas/Kayanan!
- **DOOM 2099 #22:** A mysterious woman from Doom's past returns! By Moore/Broderick/Nyberg!
- **EXCALIBUR #53:** The countdown to **Generation X** continues! By Lobdell/Lashley/Candelario!
- **GENERATION X COLLECTOR'S PREVIEW #1:** Here comes a new mutant slackers!
- **GHOST RIDER 2099 #9:** GR's girlfriend is sick — and **Alchemax** has the cure! By Kaminski/Buckingham!
- **G.I. JOE #163:** Meet the Battle Attack Trooper code-named the BAT! By Fein & Quinones/Rosado/ Snider!
- **INCREDIBLE HULK #422:** A **Thor/Hulk** clash like you've never seen before! By Wacker/Frank/Smith!
- **JUSTICE: FOUR BALANCE #2:** Everybody hates the **Hate Monger!** By Nickeas/Ryan!
- **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #105: Rage** goes on a date! Plus: Wolverine!
- **MARVEL SUPER HEROES MEGAZINE #1:** Classic tales of **Hulk, FF** and more!
- **MARVEL TALES #290:** Jameson hires **X-Factor** to hunt down Spidey! By DeFalco/Leonardi/Layton!
- **MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED #7:** It's swamp-critic action with the **Man-Thing!** By Benson & Abnett!
- **MORBIUS #20:** Breaking up is hard to do — especially when you're a *vampire!* By Trusiani/Gilmore/ Bryant!
- **NOVA #10: Diamondhead! Corrupter! Rhino!** And in this corner ... Nova! By Marriner/ Stegbauer!
- **PUNISHER ANNUAL #7:** European sight-seeing — Punisher-style! By Abnett & Lanning/ Braithwaite/Williamson!
- **PUNISHER #95:** Punisher and Garokoth must escape a deadly combat arena! By Abnett & Lanning/Texeir!
- **REN & STIMPY: MASTERS OF TIME & SPACE SPECIAL #1:** Choose your own exciting adventure! By Slott/Kazakiri!
- **REN & STIMPY TPB: YOUR PALS:** Featuring Stimpy as the *king of rock!*
- **ROCKO'S MODERN LIFE #5:** Rocko's in the doghouse with **Earl the Tough Dog!** By Lewandowski/ Auch/Fields!
- **SABRETOOTH CLASSICS #5:** Sabretooth starts a slaughter with the **Marauders!** By L. Simonson/ W. Simonson/Wiacek!
- **SPIDER-MAN MAGAZINE #7:** Spidey and the Hulk battle the **Juggernaut!**
- **SPIDER-MAN #51:** Spidey's clone fights alone! By Mackie/Lyle/ Hanna!
- **TRANSFORMERS: GENERATION 2 #12: Optimus Prime** is consumed! Last issue! By Furman/Gallant & Senior/Amash!
- **WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #32: Count Abyss** poisons the soul gem! By Arcudi/Cliffet
- **WHAT IF #86:** What if **Rogue** possessed the power of Thor? By Furman/Royle/Georgiou!
- **X-MEN #37:** The X-Men battle the next generation of mutants! By Nicieza/Kubert/Ryan!
- **X-MEN 2099 #13:** In this issue, you'll get a hunka hunka **Brimstone** Love! By Moore/Lim/Sanders III!
- **X-MEN POSTER BOOK #3:** With an all-new cover by Richard Bennett! By Various!

CLIMACTIC CONCLUSION ... FOOMES RETURN TO BUST THE NEW WARRIORS! CHOPS ... SHOCK DRAW OF THE